
Utility Customer Service

Appropriation: \$ 2,690,145

The Utility Customer Service Division is responsible for reading water meters; providing monthly utility bills; responding to customer questions, concerns, requests and problems; and collection of delinquent customer accounts. The division is also charged with providing complete and accurate financial data to the Governing Body, the Finance Director, the utility enterprise divisions and the citizens of Santa Fe.

The Utility Customer Service Division consists of three sections: Meter Reading, Customer Service, and Collections. All three sections work as a cohesive team to assure accurate meter reading, billing and customer service for over 33,000 utility accounts. The division works closely with the Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste Divisions to ensure that services are properly rendered, customer problems are addressed, and that all divisions are kept abreast of problems or potential problems with their systems, procedures or processes. The division also works extensively with the Public Utilities, Water Conservation and Water Rate Steering Committees to provide assistance, information and reporting as required.

2004/05 Operational Highlights:

- Continued development of a comprehensive set of policies and procedures for the division.
- Completed the Remote Meter Reading System pilot program for approximately 1,000 residential and commercial water accounts, resulting in a recommendation for full-scale implementation of the program.
- Continued an aggressive program for collection of delinquent accounts.
- Continued the Customer Service Call Monitoring System and associated customer service training.
- Created and initiated a utility billing dispute resolution procedure and contracted with an independent hearing officer to assist in resolving customer disputes.
- Worked closely and successfully with the Water Services Division on several projects, including an unaccounted-for water audit, new utility rate recommendations, an annual meter replacement program, and a new bill format which includes a water usage graph.
- Remodeled the Customer Service area for safety, comfort and increased efficiency.

2005/06 Goals and Objectives:

- Continue the development of and necessary modifications to division policies and procedures.
- Continue to plan for city-wide implementation of the Remote Meter Reading Pilot Project at the discretion of the City Council.
- Continue to monitor and evaluate customer service calls.

- Contract the services of a collections agency to assist in the collection of delinquent customer accounts.
- Remodel the customer service area to create a safer and more efficient working environment.
- Implement a new utility bill format, including a graph of historical water usage.
- Work with the Information Technology & Telecommunications Department on evaluation and purchase of software systems to enhance division productivity and efficiency.

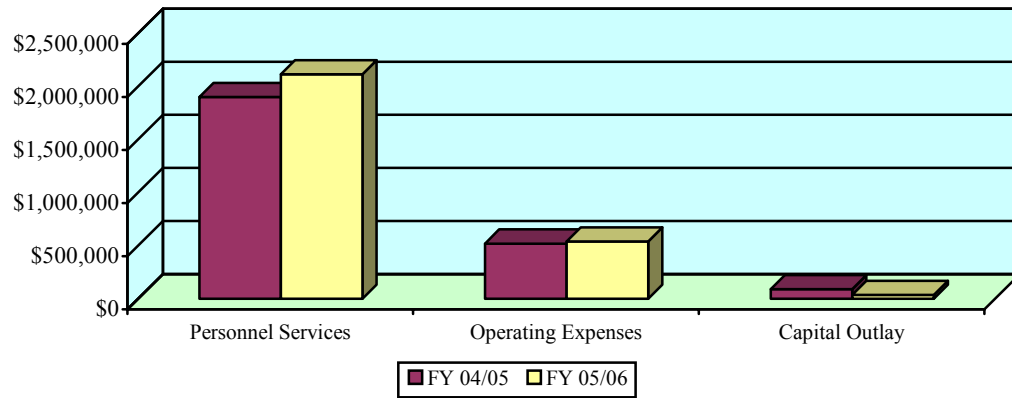
Budget Commentary:

The Utility Customer Service Division is supported by an appropriation of \$2,690,145 from the Utility Customer Service Fund (5205), which provides funding for 29 staff members and operational costs for the division. This fund is entirely supported by funding allocations from the Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste Utilities that are determined based on the share of division expenses attributable to each utility's customer service needs. Major division expenses for FY 2005/06 include printing and mailing of utility bills (including some contracted services) totaling \$251,262; various professional contracts in the amount of \$171,000; and computers and equipment purchases totaling \$39,100.

During FY 2004/05 an Account Technician was added to the Utility Customer Service Division. For the FY 2005/06 budget, an additional Account Technician was added; in addition, an Accounting Supervisor was reclassified to an Administrative Supervisor, and a Meter Reader was reclassified to a Meter Reader Service Technician.

<u>POSITION/CLASSIFICATION</u>	<u>FY 04/05 ACTUAL</u>	<u>FY 05/06 BUDGET</u>
Utility Customer Service Division Director	1 – CLFT	1 – CLFT
Accounting Supervisor	1 – CLFT	0 – CLFT
Accounts Manager Collections Monitor	1 – CLFT	1 – CLFT
Account Specialist	1 – CLFT	1 – CLFT
Account Technician	8 – CLFT	10 – CLFT
Administrative Secretary	1 – CLFT	1 – CLFT
Administrative Supervisor	0 – CLFT	1 – CLFT
Collections Manager	1 – CLFT	1 – CLFT
Customer Service Manager	1 – CLFT	1 – CLFT
Database Specialist	2 – CLFT	2 – CLFT
Lead Meter Reader	1 – CLFT	1 – CLFT
Meter Reader	6 – CLFT	5 – CLFT
Meter Reader Service Technician	0 – CLFT	1 – CLFT
Meter Reading Supervisor	1 – CLFT	1 – CLFT
Utility Billing Investigator	1 – CLFT	1 – CLFT
Utility Collections Investigator	<u>1</u> – CLFT	<u>1</u> – CLFT
TOTAL:	27	29

EXPENDITURE CLASSIFICATION



	<u>FY 04/05 REVISED</u>	<u>FY 05/06 APPROPRIATION</u>
Personnel Services	\$ 1,900,050	\$ 2,115,085
Operating Expenses	520,089	539,460
Capital Outlay	<u>90,050</u>	<u>35,600</u>
 TOTAL:	 \$ 2,510,189	 \$ 2,690,145